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Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod.

1. INTRODUCTORY.

From the history of those conflicts our descendants will have to form their conviction as to which side had a right to shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

PRESIDENT P. BRAND, *in Opening Address at Brooklyn, N. Y., May 4, 1898.*[1])

A current definition of confessionalism runs: "Confessionalism is a strict adherence to the confessions of some particular church or sect; it is the conforming in teaching and preaching with scrupulous fidelity to the letter and spirit of the confessional writings of some particular division of the Christian Church. Lutheran confessionalism is the strict adherence to the Lutheran confessions in letter and spirit." [2]) But for the omission of "and practise" after "teaching and preaching" the definition would be altogether satisfactory. This omission accounts for an illogical division of the subject of "confessionalism," or rather of "confessionalists," to which we shall refer later.

Men of judgment and extensive observation outside of the Missouri Synod, when asked to name the one feature which distinguishes this Synod from others, will invariably name the peculiar type of confessionalism that controls the activities of this body. Not infrequently the statement about the Missouri Synod's confessionalism is qualified by some such phase as "hyper-" or "extreme." There are situations which few Missourians, if any, are spared, when it is anything rather than a joy and delight to be a Missourian. For to be a Missourian often means to be declared an ecclesiastical and social misfit, to be forced into isolation, and — insult being added to injury — to be told that the isolation was

1) Eastern Dist. Rep., Mo. Syn., 1898, p. 14.

2) Dr. J. Nicum, in *Luth. Cyclop.*, p. 129.

self-inflicted: it is due to the exaggerated forms which the confessionalism of Missourians is said to assume — the confessional overemphasis. It is believed that this feature makes the Missouri Synod a permanent and hopeless incongruity in the complex of the Lutheran organizations in the world. It is, therefore, pertinent and in the interest both of Missourians and Lutherans in general to inquire into the causes, the quality, and the scope and aim of the confessionalism of the Missouri Synod, and to ascertain whether it is at all possible to remove the friction which is evidently caused by the confessional attitude of the Missouri Synod.

It is also opportune to attempt such an inquiry in view of the fact that the Missouri Synod is on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee of its existence. Three quarters of a century is too long an extent of time to be spanned by the conscious and responsible part of a single man's life. There is no Missourian living who has been an eye- and ear-witness of the confessional struggles of the Missouri Synod, who could recount the significant incidents and evolutions of this struggle and interpret from his personal knowledge its lessons of warning and encouragement. Neither is there such a person living among the opponents of the Missouri Synod. The study of this subject, at least in its initial stage, must be a study of the records of the past. To examine these records is, to Missourians, a sacred duty and a beneficial exercise. The men who will be doing the work of the Missouri Synod in 1921 will be guided to a more intelligent and satisfactory estimate of the distinctive character of that work, if they learn to understand why it was that a handful of men felt constrained to organize within the Lutheran Church of America a separate body which came to be called "The Missouri Synod." Present-day convictions of Missourians that have a bearing on their activities as churchmen are unquestionably determined by principles settled upon at that early time. What happened at Chicago on Monday, April 26, 1847, marks the beginning of a permanent policy in American Lutheranism.

2. The Causes.

> When our Synod started on its career in America, everybody was saying, "There is a new sect come into existence."
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> Dr. Walther, *at Fort Dodge, Iowa, August 21, 1879.*[3])

Without any attempt at facetiousness the dictum of the Sage of Verulam may be applied, *mutatis mutandis,* to the subject of confessionalism: Some men are born confessionalists, some achieve

3) Iowa Dist. Rep., Mo. Syn., 1879, p. 13.

confessionalism, and some have confessionalism thrust upon them. The sense is this: Conditions of church-life have been, and can be created, which render confessionalism the natural element, the atmosphere, in which a person spends his life. The thousands of Missourians who form the later generations of the Synod's membership enjoy this privilege: not that they are confessionalists by reason of their physical birth, but the conditions of their church-life that meet them from earliest infancy and in which they grow up are regulated by such a pronounced regard for the Confessions of their Church that they come to believe confessionalism to be the normal status of a Lutheran — which, indeed, it is.

It was different with the founders of the Missouri Synod. They hailed from parts of Germany in which, owing to the ravages of pietism and rationalism, Lutheran confessional fidelity had become a rarity. Since the union-edict of Frederick III in 1817, confessional Lutheranism was even persecuted, not only in Prussia, but also in all those countries which had adopted the mistaken policy of the Prussian king and his ministers. Prof. Guenther writes: "The oppression of true Lutherans in Saxony for their faith's sake was simply appalling. In His *Life of Buenger* Walther describes the horrible condition of the state church of Saxony:[4] '. . . The unconditional pledge of adherence to the Book of Concord was at that time nothing but an empty comedy, and of the same order were the most important ordinances of the state church: they were actual and manifest repudiations of the Confessions of the Church, which, nevertheless, had been accepted under oath, and they proved plainly that only on the basis of the moral principles of Jesuitism could the assertion be made that the Saxon state church was still a Lutheran, hence an orthodox church, for the reason, namely, that in it the confessions were still officially recognized.'" The sacred acts of Baptism, Absolution, Communion were performed according to formularies that scandalized conscientious Lutherans. The religious instruction of Lutheran children in the state schools had a practically paganizing tendency. Separatist meetings of confessional Lutherans for worship were placed under an interdict by the government, and when they occurred and were discovered, had to be broken up by the police. Permission for organizing a Free Church, independent of state control, could not be obtained.[5]

Under these precarious, provoking conditions the determined,

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4) See *Lutheraner*, 1882, p. 62 f. 5) *Lutheraner*, 1888, p. 138.

unyielding confessional spirit of the founders of the Missouri Synod was formed, and given its rugged, stubborn, tenacious features. The storm-tossed oak becomes gnarly and tough; it lacks the graces of the tropical palm. But the sterner stuff of which it is made, renders it a stalwart article, fit for harder usages. In those days of anguish the thought, too, of emigrating to America began to be entertained by the Saxon Lutherans. "How gladly," writes Walther, "would the believing Lutheran pastors and laymen have surrendered everything, if they could have obtained the permission to separate from the grievously corrupted and apostate state church and to organize as a Lutheran Free Church! But it was absolutely hopeless to think of such an official grant at that time. They saw, accordingly, that their only way of escape from the tyranny to which their consciences were subjected, which became more intolerable as time wore on, and which threatened to stifle their life of faith, was to emigrate to a country in which religious liberty was guaranteed." [6]

As a body pledged to, and to a considerable degree trained in, fidelity to the Lutheran Confessions they landed at St. Louis in 1839. Their reputation as "strait-laced orthodoxists" had preceded them, and hostile journalists had prepared the mind of the public to look upon them with considerable disfavor.[7] The faithlessness of their leader, which was exposed soon after their arrival in America, lent color to the evil reports that had been set afloat against them. Diffidence and doubts regarding the righteousness of their cause, the justifiableness of their emigration enterprise, in fact, their Christian and Lutheran status, became rife in their own ranks. Great searchings of heart, involving every member of the colony, took place on the banks of the Obrazos River in Missouri in the spring and summer of 1839. In all seriousness the question was, even formally, debated among them, whether they really were a spiritual priesthood of believers, vested with the rights and prerogatives of Christians, and whether the Church of God existed among them. Next to the divine instruction which they drew from the Word of God in those days, it was the testimony of the Lutheran Confessions and compelling reasons drawn from them in able arguments that stablished their faltering hearts and revived their drooping spirits. More than ever it appeared necessary to them to furnish to everybody whom they might be able

6) *Lutheraner, l. c.*

7) See account in *Young Lutherans' Magazine*, 1920, p. 87 ff.

to reach by their testimony the evidence that they were and meant to be Lutherans, sincerely loyal to the Book of Concord. To extend their testimony and render it more emphatic, they started their first church-paper in 1844 and called it *Der Lutheraner*. Their editor, Walther, explained the object of the publication: "The conviction that it is our duty to render an account to our fellow-citizens as to what is believed and taught in our Church, and what are the guiding principles of our action, has induced the undersigned, together with several brethren in Missouri and Illinois, ministers and laymen, to publish a paper with the above title. The object of this paper shall be: 1. to acquaint men with the doctrine, the treasures, and the history of the Lutheran Church; 2. to furnish the evidence that this Church is not to be classed as one of the Christian sects, but is the old true Church of Jesus Christ on earth, which has not by any means become extinct, and never can become extinct, because of the promise of Christ: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world'; 3. to show how as a true Lutheran a person can hold the correct faith, lead a Christian life, suffer patiently, and die saved; 4. finally, to expose, refute, and warn against the false and misleading teachings current at the present time, and in particular, to reveal those who falsely call themselves Lutherans, and under this name are disseminating misbelief, unbelief, and fanatical views and thereby excite among the members of other parties the worst prejudices against our Church. — Not a few, when reading this, will deny our ability to achieve the aim which we have fixed for ourselves, or will fear that our paper will breathe the spirit of intolerance, and thus sustain and feed hatred among people of different beliefs. Our answer to the first objection is merely this: We perceive assuredly more keenly than any one else our lack of ability for discharging in their full scope the duties of an editor of a Christian paper. However, we know that in divine matters not great learning and eloquence, but a real live knowledge of the saving truth and a simple testimony in its behalf are paramount for serving the brethren. Besides, we intend to let the most genial teachers of our Church, especially Luther, speak to our readers. . . . As regards the other objection, that will soon be removed by a careful examination of a few issues of our paper. We had been caught ourselves for a considerable time in all sorts of errors, but God was patient with us and with great long-suffering led us into the way of the truth. Remembering this, we shall practise patience towards our erring fellow-men and by the grace of God shall re-

frain from all sinful judging and condemning. We shall not attack the erring person, but rather his error. We shall not deport ourselves as people who claim to be the only Lutherans and to possess the truth alone, but we shall bear this testimony only that God has done great things for us, and has guided us to a living knowledge of the only saving truth." [8]

These men, then, had achieved confessionalism in many a severe spiritual conflict, and had confessionalism thrust upon them by the force of circumstances that confronted them upon their arrival in America. Walther's serial articles in the first four issues of his paper "On the Name 'Lutheran'" follow the scope indicated in his preface.[9] Actually the Saxon spokesmen for a confessional Lutheranism who had come to America buoyed up by the sure expectation that here their tribulations would be over and they would be recognized and appreciated for what they were, found themselves cruelly disappointed in their primary hope. They had to fight for recognition as Lutherans, and the most galling element in their disappointment was that their own brethren in name denied their Lutheran character. Slowly and reluctantly American Lutherans came to admit, with more or less serious reservations, that the Missourians are Lutherans.

Walther said: "When our Synod started on its career in America, everybody was saying, 'There is a new sect come into existence.' For the Lutheran doctrine was not known. Perhaps not ten copies of the Book of Concord besides our own could be located, and among those who were called theologians we could not find one who had read, much less studied it. If we had not been able at that time to prove by means of our confessional writings that ours is the Lutheran doctrine, we should have had to submit to being called a sect. If we had said, 'We are Lutherans,' our opponents would have replied: 'You misunderstand the Holy Scriptures; yours is not the understanding that Luther had.' But we were able to say: 'Observe that we mean nothing else than what is recorded in our Book of Concord. Prove to us that we are departing from it in a single point, and we shall quit calling ourselves Lutherans.' Men had to see that we could justly appeal to the Symbolical Books, and by the grace of God it was brought about that all who sincerely desired to be Lutherans united with us."

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8) *Lutheraner*, 1844, p. 1.

9) *Ibid.*, p. 2 ff. 5 ff. 9 ff. 13 ff. This article is an American Lutheran classic, and deserves to be reproduced in English.

Nor was the task of winning congregations to affiliation with the Missouri Synod a less difficult one. In the paper from which we have just quoted and which was read at the first convention of the newly organized Iowa District, Walther said: "Our beloved congregations, too, which at first had regarded us with distrust, finally said: 'These men are offering us nothing but what we find in our Catechism.' That is what convinced them that we were true Lutherans. May this District, then, also consider fidelity to the Confessions its principal duty, as our fathers did." [10])

The first and the unkindliest cut received by the Saxon confessionalists was dealt them by dear brethren, fellow-immigrants from Prussia, who had settled near Buffalo, N. Y. Their leader had been admonished by the Saxons because of hierarchical tendencies which he had manifested in his teaching and ministration. He induced the synod which he had organized to address to the Saxons these vehement strictures: —

"The present synod unanimously declares that the ministers, Walther, Loeber, and their accomplices, are living in false doctrine as regards the sacred office of the ministry, and the call thereunto, the Church and the Office of the Keys, Church Government, and the Spiritual Priesthood; and that from these false teachings and errors manifest sins and crimes have arisen and are still arising from which they refuse to desist in spite of all instructions and admonitions that we have addressed to them for five years. We declare furthermore that they are wilful and proud sinners who in spite of all Christian exhortation have increased in sins and become strong in crime. Therefore, we have to regard them as wilful false teachers and manifest, zealous sinners, until they turn, repent, and sincerely seek reconciliation with us." [11])

The opposition which the Missouri Synod had to experience for its confessionalism from the older Lutheran bodies in America had its source and basis in plain ignorance. It is chiefly these bodies that Walther has in mind in the remarks he made to the Iowa District in 1879. Lest any one imagine that he said too much when he declared: "The Lutheran doctrine was not known. Perhaps not ten copies of the Book of Concord," etc., we would here introduce an able Lutheran spokesman outside of the Missouri Synod, Dr. Adolph Spaeth, who has described the state of

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10) Iowa Dist. Rep., 1879, p. 13 f.

11) *Hirtenbrief d. Buffalo-Syn.;* cited in Eastern Dist. Rep., Mo. Syn., 1901, p. 18.

American Lutheranism prior to the rise of the Missouri Synod for the greatest Protestant Encyclopedia of the world — the German *Protestantische Realenzyklopaedie.* He says: —

"It is undeniable that in this period [of retrogression] that full consciousness of adherence to the confessional basis which is indispensable to a free church was weakened and shaken. There were evidences of indifferentism, subjectivism, and, occasionally, of outspoken rationalism. In 1792 the Constitution of the Pennsylvania Synod was changed in such a way as to drop all mention of the Lutheran Confessions. The Constitution thus amended two years later became the basis of that adopted by the New York Ministerium. Still the pastors at their ordination continued to sign a guarantee in which they promised to keep their teaching in harmony with the Word of God and the Symbolical Books. After the death of Kunze a change essentially for the worse took place. At the head of the New York Ministerium there now came to be Dr. Frederick Henry Quitmann, a pupil of Semler, and a declared devotee of vulgar rationalism. Under his influence the old Lutheran Catechisms, hymnals, and liturgies were supplanted by others, alleged to better 'meet the needs of the rising generation.' As early as 1797 the strange resolution was passed: 'Whereas a close union is taking place between the Episcopal and the Lutheran Church, and the consistory, on account of the identity of their doctrine and the near relationship of their discipline, will never recognize a Lutheran Church using the English language exclusively, when erected at a place where the members can take part in the Episcopal service,' etc. This resolution, with the passing of which it is likely that the Germans' love of their language in their antagonism to the English had very much to do, was formally rescinded seven years later. A parallel instance occurred in Pennsylvania, where a series of resolutions was passed in 1819 and 1822, which openly labored for a formal union with the Reformed. Also in Pennsylvania the hymnals and liturgies, in particular, evidenced the decline of churchly and confessional consciousness. The very first printed agenda of 1786 showed a decided retrogression, compared to the one of 1748 which had existed only in manuscript. True, the hymnal of 1786, in the compilation of which Muehlenberg still cooperated and for which he wrote the preface, still contained a goodly number of the sturdy old Lutheran hymns in good texts, uncorrupted except in a few instances. But even in this hymnal there is found an unduly large number of the hymns of Hallean Pietism which were of a rather subjective tenor. Occa-

sionally the editor, Dr. Helmuth, has, moreover, taken the liberty to make changes in the text of hymns by Paul Gerhardt, John Heermann, and others, that were entirely unnecessary and bore a dogmatic significance. The agenda of 1818 signals a thorough defection from the beautiful, ancient order of service of the Lutheran Church and, what is worse than all, a defection also from the Lutheran doctrine and confessions in the formulas for Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Ordination. And the so-called union hymnal of 1817 which preceded this agenda and which was highly recommended by the Synods of Pennsylvania, New York, and North Carolina, is one of the sorriest instances of the decadence in hymnology which prevailed at that time, also in Germany. The sturdy old hymns have become disfigured to such an extent that it is almost impossible to recognize them. Only one hymn of Luther, 'Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee,' was received into this hymnal. . . .

"In many instances German national consciousness and love of the German language were much stronger during this period than the churchly and Lutheran consciousness. Even the venerable Frederick Christian Schaefer, of New York, in a letter addressed to the Pennsylvania Synod in 1819, insisted that 'as Lutherans and Reformed were united in one Evangelical Church in Germany, the true Germans in America ought in this respect to follow the example of the Germans in Germany. . . .

"In the General Synod . . . there are observed, from the very beginning, two antagonistic currents, which at first exist peaceably alongside of one another, as if by a tacit compromise, but finally had to turn against one another and engage in a hot contest for the supremacy. On the one side there is a conservative element, the so-called Symbolists (Confessionalists) who seek to retain, though with great timidity and restraint, not only the name, but also the spirit and faith of the Lutheran Church. On the other side stands 'American Lutheranism,' which has lost contact with the Lutheran spirit, and, as far as it still strives to be positively Christian, is permeated through and through with Puritanic and Methodist influences. During the first twenty-five years of the General Synod this latter element was decidedly the dominant one. In the original Constitution (of the General Synod) the Confessions were utterly ignored. However, at the founding of its theological seminary at Gettysburg the General Synod decreed that at this institution 'the fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture as they are contained in the Augsburg Confession are to be taught

in the English and the German language.' At their induction into office the professors had to declare under oath: 'I believe that the Augsburg Confession and the Catechisms of Luther are a comprehensive and correct declaration of the fundamental doctrines of God's Word.' However, what this teacher's pledge really meant, or rather what it did not mean, was unreservedly expressed when the leading professor at this institution, Dr. S. S. Schmucker, said: 'If the professors were to inculcate upon their students the antiquated views of the Symbolical Books, . . . they would commit a breach of confidence towards those who placed them in office, and would act contrary to the entire scope and plan of the institution.' There is no doubt that in thus interpreting and applying the paragraph relating to doctrine, Dr. Schmucker at that time had the majority in the General Synod on his side. And in the course of years this man, who had received his own theological training at the Presbyterian seminary at Princeton, educated an entire generation of 'Lutheran' pastors. The spirit which he had nursed to maturity is best characterized by a letter of 1845, addressed to the Evangelical Church of Germany to which an appeal was made for contributions to the Gettysburg Seminary. The committee in question declares in the name of the General Synod: 'In the majority of our ecclesiastical principles we stand on a joint basis with the union church of Germany. The distinctive doctrines of the old Lutheran and the Reformed Churches we do not regard as essential. . . . Luther's peculiar view of the corporeal presence of the Lord in the Supper has long been dropped by the majority of our ministers.' " [12])

Small wonder, when one bears in mind this unfortunate state of affairs, that voices of strong dissent should be raised within the circle of these older Lutheran bodies against the strict confessionalism of the Missouri Synod. The *Lutheran Observer* admitted that *Der Lutheraner* was the best edited paper of the American Lutheran Church, but added: "We have little sympathy with the exclusive, orthodox spirit which *Der Lutheraner* advocates." [13]) In the *Missionary,* February, 1849, Dr. Passavant wrote: —

"We have a great controversy with our brethren in the Missouri Synod because of their exclusiveness and their unpardonable one-sidedness, which in many instances is the cause why both they and their Church are evil spoken of and their usefulness is materially hindered."

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12) PRE[3] 14, 192–4. 13) Cited in East. Dist. Rep., 1898, p. 14.

In 1854 the *Observer* wrote: "It is true, there are a few small parties which call themselves Lutheran, but they are not of us, and there is no hope that the Missourians or the Buffalonians and other small societies will ever become wiser in their generation. But it may be expected that their children and children's children will outgrow the narrow prejudices of their fathers and become intelligent and useful Christians. (*Sic!*) As was stated, we do not regard these parties as Lutherans; they have stolen a part of Luther's livery, but they have not Luther's spirit and would be disavowed by the great Reformer, if he were still on earth. . . .

"They are a sort of spiritual Ishmaelites; their proper place is the Roman Church, where men believe what they are taught, as the Church believes, and not what the Bible and the Holy Spirit teaches them." [14])

On November 1, 1862, the *Herald* wrote: —

"Among those whose extinction would be gain belong undoubtedly *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre,* if these publications will not cease functioning as executioners."

And once more the *Observer,* in December, 1864, delivers the following opinion: —

"There are many things among the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod which are to be profoundly regretted, namely, their bigotry, their exclusiveness, and their extreme high-churchism. They have committed a deplorable error by placing themselves on a hyper-Lutheran basis. . . . Unlike ourselves they sadly offend by making human speculations on matters which are not revealed by inspiration a part of the creed of their Church. They err in refusing to sympathize with the Christians of this country, and especially in declining to enter into an intimate ecclesiastical communion with the American Lutheran Church and its General Synod. It is strange that Christian people who come to live in this country fail to see the hand of God in the type of Christianity which characterizes the Church of this country, and that they are unable to hear the voice of Providence which calls them to join the ranks of the sacramental hosts that are led in this country by the great Captain." [15])

Expressions of similar tenor might be submitted, extending to more recent times, but the present situation as regards Lutheran confessionalism in America may be regarded as summed up by

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14) Cited in East. Dist. Rep., 1901, p. 18.

15) Cited in East. Dist. Rep., 1898, p. 15.

Dr. Nicum. After giving the definition of Lutheran confessionalism which was cited at the beginning of this article, he proceeds: "It is evident that, from this definition, two kinds of confessionalism result, or are at least possible, to wit: 1. A conservative, healthy, and evangelical confessionalism, which, while carefully guarding the letter and terms of the Confessions, lays no less stress upon their spirit and their historic interpretation; and 2. an extreme, unhealthy, and unevangelical confessionalism, which, whilst it may claim to interpret the Confessions in the spirit of their authors and in their historical connection, lays, however, greater stress upon the terms used, and gives to the documents an interpretation that is neither warranted by the context nor intended by their authors. Extreme confessionalists are apt to go beyond the Confessions and draw illegitimate inferences from them." The reference in this last remark, as is seen from the author's expansion of his thought, is to the Missouri Synod. Whether his division can stand and continue to be cited as authority, and whether the characterization of the second type of Lutheran Confessionalism is just, an examination of the quality of true confessionalism will have to show. D.

Organic Union of Protestantism.

The *Continent* (Chicago) some years ago satirized the prevailing method of laboring for union of the churches. It contained an imaginative report of the meeting of a mythic body, the "Christotheists," in which the following platform for a proposed union of churches was adopted: "1) We believe union to be highly desirable. 2) We recognize the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. 3) Everybody ought to be good. 4) All Christian bodies must recognize in their divine appointment the central principle of the Christotheists." This quadrilateral is adopted, the doxology is sung, prayer is offered to God for His blessing on the movement, and the convention adjourns, after appointing a body authorized to treat with all other denominations. One by one these bodies meet. They receive with dignified courtesy the official overture from the Christotheists, and the following resolutions are adopted: *"Resolved,* That we have received with great gratitude to God and sincere appreciation of the brotherly spirit shown by the Christotheists, the foregoing resolutions and believe that they present a nearer approach to possible Christian union than anything we have previously considered. *Resolved,* That we

heartily accept propositions 1, 2, and 3, but believe that some slight modification of No. 4 would be necessary before this denomination, as a whole, could accept it. *Resolved,* That we sincerely hope these negotiations may not terminate, and we appoint a commission authorized to confer further with the Christotheists and other Christian bodies in the sincere hope that these negotiations may not end until all the churches of our country and of the world become united in essential unity." Whereupon they sing the doxology and adjourn, and something like unto this happens in each of the other denominations, as they consider it one by one.

Undeniably clever as this parody is, the movement for organic union is not to be dismissed with a sarcastic fling. The perils which attend the prevalent mania for union touch the very life and purpose of the Church. Hence, wherever there is an appreciation of the basic essentials of Christianity, voices of warning have lately been raised against the drift towards a corporate union of denominations. The *Watchman-Examiner,* speaking for the conservative wing of the Baptists, says: "There can be no organic union without shameful compromise. Better a half dozen churches in a village than a single church composed of those who believe one thing and practise another." Dr. Amory H. Bradford has said: "Until there is unity of spirit, unity of form will be worse than useless. If men are not agreed, no good can come from welding them together. Compel the Puritan to worship like an Anglican, and the Anglican to worship like a Quaker, and what is the result? Make the Church a gigantic organization with numberless bishops, one being supreme, whatever the name, and there will be one body, but there will be no life, no divine fire. Where there is unity of spirit, unity of form may be desirable, and not till then. . . . Where the spirit is, there will be essential unity." Rev. Eugene Bell (Southern Presbyterian) protests against the unwillingness of some churchmen to insist upon the same degree of loyalty in matters of faith and practise which is demanded of citizens in time of war: "When the same vital question is raised in ecclesiastical matters, it is politely waved aside, and we are told simply to behold how lovely and beautiful it is 'for brethren to dwell together in unity.'"

As for the claim that some creedal basis might be found which would embody those tenets which are common to all denominations, Dr. Benj. B. Warfield had this trenchant comment in the *Presbyterian* (1916): "There are some people who suffer under the remarkable illusion that what is best in Christianity is common to

all who call themselves Christians. On the contrary, what is common to all who call themselves Christians is so little the best that is in Christianity that it is scarcely Christianity at all. What is common to all who call themselves Christians is, of course, precisely what is held by the least Christian body among all those who call themselves Christians — that, and nothing more. For if it were a single thing more than just that, it would not be common to *all* who claim the name Christian: it would not be held by the body that was least Christian of them all. The profession of 'common Christianity,' as men call it, is therefore the profession of minimum Christianity. If you want real, true, operative Christianity, you will have to go not to minimum, but to maximum Christianity. And the name of that is Evangelicalism, or more specifically, Calvinism; Protestantism, or more specifically, Presbyterianism. For these are not particular kinds of Christianity, standing by the side of other kinds, between which and them only individual taste is to decide. They are the names we give to Christianity in its purity, at its maximum, when really *itself.*"

Dr. Warfield speaks as a Presbyterian, but the principle which he announces is true, and is, moreover, so self-evidently true that any movement for organic union which demands less than a full assent to apostolic doctrine is deprived thereby of every claim to consideration by conscientious Christians.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States has come, through an overture on organic union submitted to this year's General Assembly, to the fork in the road. The overture in question originated through a resolution of the Assembly of the year 1918. This convention of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. (North) invited representatives of all Protestant bodies to a meeting on organic union, which was subsequently held at Philadelphia on December 4 of the same year. About one hundred representatives from seventeen denominations attended, though of this number some were not official delegates. The object of the conference was to take steps "for the purpose of formulating a plan of organic union" of the Evangelical churches of America. As to the general question, whether the time had come for a great merger of churches, opinion at the conference was divided. The convention compromised on a plan of Federal Union, the denominations to maintain their corporate entities under a "central constitutional authority." An Ad Interim Committee was appointed to draft a plan of union, and this Committee reported to the Interchurch Council of Organic Union at Philadelphia, February 3, 1920. The

report had two parts, a Doctrinal Preamble and an Administrative Plan. The Preamble reads as follows: —

"*Whereas,* We desire to share, as a common heritage, the faith of the Evangelical churches, which has, from time to time, found expression in great historic statements; and

"*Whereas,* We all share belief in God, our Father; in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Savior; in the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Comforter; in the Holy Catholic Church, through which God's eternal purpose of salvation is both to be proclaimed and realized; in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing God's revealed will, and in the life eternal; and

"*Whereas,* Having the same spirit and owning the same Lord, we none the less recognize diversity of gifts and ministrations for whose exercise due freedom must always be afforded in forms of worship and in modes of operation."

Then is set forth the plan of union, which briefly is as follows:

The Plan: The plan provides for a council made up of representatives of the constituent churches, with an equal number of ministers and lay members. The plan maintains, *for the present,* the autonomy of each denomination in its own affairs, creedal statement, form of government, and mode of worship.

The constituent churches are to act through this council and its executive and judicial commissions. The council shall convene every second year, and shall be made up of representatives composed of equal numbers of ministers and lay members. This council shall make its own rules, define the functions of its officers, the mode of their election, and their compensation. It shall apportion its budget among the constituent bodies. The decisions of the council shall be carried out by the supreme governing or advisory bodies of the constituent churches. The council shall harmonize and unify the work of the churches, and shall consolidate churches and boards in harmony with the laws of the State and of the churches affected. It shall undertake inspirational and educational leadership in evangelism, social service, religious education, and the like.

While this, at first reading, appears like a close federation of churches, and not an organic union, the plan has a final objective which goes much farther than simple cooperation. The consistent working out of this scheme will bring into being a new ecclesiastical body, rising on the *débris* of the denominations. The report of the Council distinctly says: "In taking this step, we look forward with confident hope *to that complete unity* [italics ours] toward which we believe the Spirit of God is leading us.

Once we have cooperated whole-heartedly in such visible body in the holy activities of the work of the Church, we are persuaded that our differences will be minimized and our union become more vital and effectual." The ultimate objective is stated quite completely in the report of the Ad Interim Committee. It says: "In order to progress, the first step must be taken in the right direction. . . . That after we have been in operation for a term of years, the importance of divisive names and creeds and methods shall pass more and more into the dim background of the past, . . . and the churches then will demand a more complete union."

Even as it stands, the Administrative Plan gives to the council the bulk of the work hitherto done by the denominations and their agencies. The council is to carry on inspirational work and educational leadership in the field of evangelism and religious education; has authority to unify and harmonize the work of the churches, both in home areas and in the mission-fields, (thereby depriving the respective churches of their autonomy); and the council may make its own rules, elect its own officers, determine its own budget, — the churches to foot the bill. (This looks much like the arrangement under which the now dead Interchurch Movement proposed to administer the affairs of Christendom.)

As for the Preamble, there are, to begin with, some noteworthy omissions. There is not a word about the atonement for sin, the forgiveness of sins, the regeneration by the Spirit, the resurrection of the body, not a word about the ascension and the return of our Lord, nor about heaven or hell. The definite intention to make this platform broad enough to include all rationalists, so long as they bear the Christian name, became evident when the word "Evangelical" was eliminated by the Ad Interim Committee, and in its stead the more general word "Christian" was substituted. "This," said the *Presbyterian* of February 19, 1920, "is the most radical decision and the most violent and hurtful stroke ever directed against Protestant evangelism by its professed friends. It is a complete surrender to rationalism."

That only extreme rationalists, possibly the Monists and the liberal wing of the Unitarians, would be excluded from fellowship in the contemplated Federation, will become clear if the creedal statements of the Preamble be scrutinized. To begin with, "share as a common heritage" is not the same as saying, "accepting as true" the Christian symbols. "God, our Father" — is not specifically Christian. "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Savior": In what sense Son, and in what sense Savior? Jesus is called "our

Savior" again and again by old Socinians and by American Unitarians, every one of whom believes in Jesus only as in a teacher or example. The Racovian Catechism of the Socinians calls Jesus "the only-begotten Son of God," as does Channing, likewise W. G. Eliot, and James Freeman Clarke, who even calls Christ the God-man, because Jesus was "a man indwelt fully by God's Spirit." Even vaguer is the third phrase, "The Holy Spirit, our Guide and Comforter." Neither the deity nor the regenerating work of the Spirit is here asserted. The statement regarding the Church is couched in words which have lately received an almost infinite variety of definition. As for Scriptures "containing God's revealed will," even a Mohammedan will subscribe to that. Any one who accepts as God's revealed will only a single sentence in the Bible may subscribe to this creed.

The Baptists (North and South) have voted against organic union, as have the Dutch Reformed, the Reformed Presbyterians, and at least the Southern Methodists. The General Assembly of the Northern Presbyterians "heartily recommended" adoption of the Plan, and an overture authorizing the next General Assembly to enter into the proposed general body is being voted on by the presbyteries this winter. The conservative organs of that body strongly oppose adoption. The *Presbyterian* has pointed out the weaknesses of the Preamble and cautions that "the organization of any kind which is not clear and explicit in the statement of its principles cannot endure, and the Church which timidly conceals its testimony in the interest of power and bigness is doomed"; that any Church adopting this Plan will have destroyed its power for testimony against error and heresy; and calls the entire venture "another case where we have left off production to indulge in great schemes."

Representatives of the various Protestant denominations in Australia recently met at Sydney to hear a report on the movement for organic union. For many years negotiations had been carried on for union between the different denominations, and although the Anglicans soon dropped out because of opposition to their demand that all the clergy of the uniting churches should be reordained, some hope remained that the non-episcopal Churches might find a common basis. The meeting at Sydney brought disillusionment. It developed that the Baptists could not go in because they refused to accept Infant Baptism. And while the proposed Basis was adopted by the Presbyterians, other bodies had

demanded no less than 179 amendments to this document, and organic union again seems far off.

What, one is prompted to ask, is the driving force behind these big union movements? We may supply the answer from an article in the *Hibbert Journal* of October, 1920. The article, discussing the union movement in Australia under the caption "Protestantism in Australia," points out the salient fact that all the denominations involved "admit that their spiritual life is weak. Each seems to be hoping that the other will give him something he does not himself possess." Now, the author of the article, Rev. A. R. Osborne, of Melbourne, says: "It may be taken as an axiom that vigorous life in a Church can only come when the members of that Church believe with all their heart and soul that they have a gospel for humanity which has been entrusted to them in order that they may proclaim it. When Luther nailed his theses to the church-door at Wittenberg, he felt that the very essence of the Gospel was at stake, and he was prepared to maintain his case or die." Well said, and very true. Our author continues to say that in time past each Protestant Church believed that it stood for the truth; "to them their creed and polity were matters of principle, and they prepared to separate from others to maintain them." But to-day "there is no rallying-point such as Luther had when he proclaimed justification by faith." "There is not any outburst of zeal for the spreading of the Gospel." And while the Roman Catholic Church, in its schools, "with the scientific exactness of trained psychologists binds the scholars throughout their lives to the Church," nothing similar to this is found in Protestantism. Rev. Osborne then suggests, and here we part company with him abruptly, that a "second Reformation" is needed, and a new creed must be found which "embodies our conception of Christian truth in the language and from the view-point of our age," a creed in which religion is no longer conceived as based on authority, and in which "inherited beliefs and institutions" are discarded.

Christians by conviction — Rev. Osborne ought to be told that there are still such — will not be tempted to take the final plunge into apostasy which he suggests to the Churches. But his diagnosis is correct, and what he asserts about the Churches of Australia, that they are "slowly disintegrating," applies with equal truth in the United States. Helplessness, a sense of futility and failure, has begotten the modern "get-together" attitude. However, there is another motive, even less to the credit of the Churches, recog-

nizable in the colossal scope of the plans which have lately been promulgated for the union of the Church. That motive is — pride and the love of power. We shall quote, in conclusion of our article, an apposite reference to this factor from the *Presbyterian* of 1918:

"The present cry for internationalism and Church organic union is simply weak reassertions of the old effort after uniformity, the old imperialism and papacy. The root of it is the love of power. It is an ambition to achieve great external things by the use of force, rather than obtain great internal results by the power of an endless life. The more rapid the movement, the more dangerous it is. The higher it reaches, the greater will be its fall. If the lovers of organic union press it too fast and too far, it will split the Church in twain. One part will consist of those who live under conviction of the truth, who love life and liberty. The other part will consist of those who care little for truth, ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of truth, and, with Pilate, ever asking, 'What is truth?' These will sacrifice liberty for power in administration and external achievement." G.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Ethical Preaching Fails to "Work."

It is putting the finger on the real sore in our religious life of the conventional sort when Dr. Drysdale writes in *The Intelligencer* (Nov. 17): "In religion we have discarded the idea that deep down in human nature there is a tendency to wrong-doing, called by the fathers, for want of a better name, 'original sin,' which needs to be dealt with harshly. We have fostered the idea that men can come into the presence of God in an indifferent, careless, and intermittent manner, without a deep sense of the necessity of being purged with hyssop and made clean. We go out into life with a *sang-froid* which betokens no deep searching of a soul which cries, 'Lead me in the way everlasting.' We do all this because we are not serious about God and God's purpose, or about the motives of life, or about squaring of our business, politics, or pleasure with the eternal moral verities." This literary silhouette of present-day religiousness without religion is herewith put on file as part of the declaration of bankruptcy of the "ethical" method of teaching a "vital" Christianity. Justification by grace through faith, the cardinal doctrine of the Scriptures, in fact, the very Gospel, has been scouted as of inferior moral worth, and its preaching deprecated because of its tendency to enfeeble the aggressive and progressive spirit that wants to "work" in the Kingdom. Now the discovery is made that the ethically funded, ethically oriented, and ethically aimed organization does not work, because it

lacks energy, and representatives of that obsolescent type of Christianity which still preaches Christ and Him Crucified are wondering whether the discovery will lead to the reinstatement of the one power that "works" and is sufficient for all purposes of the Christian religion, the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake.

It does not seem so; the writer quoted holds that "we need a few healthy pessimists like Elijah and Carlyle, who see life as it is and take us into a solid gloom where one's eyes are given a rest and brought back to normal vision — who also make vigorous battle on the monkeys and the parrots who prate the shibboleths and catchwords of an empty and sickening optimism which has place only in the kingdom of humming-birds." Nay; this will not remedy the evil. One can relish the writer's classical way of expressing a reasonable disgust, just as one can feel in accord with him in his onslaught on the popular modern "Pollyanna Philosophy," which, he says, "consists in the closing of one's eye to all disagreeable things, and going down the way in a sort of ignorant, unseeing, unthinking, jolly, reckless, irresponsible, childish fox-trot. Light-hearted people, to whom nothing serious makes appeal; people who are as ignorant of the great underlying facts of present-day life as they are of the inhabitants of Mars; people who are satisfied with the physical comforts, smile and grimace, and prate the shibboleths of a 'Pollyanna'-Mrs. Eddy-Ralph Waldo Trine-Dr. Frank Crane school of philosophy, and call themselves optimists."

This is all true, but pessimism will not improve the state of affairs. The modern forms of optimism are nothing but a recurrence of the ancient "laughing death," a disease that produced an uncanny mirth and ended in a spasm of hideous grinning, which was the smile of the end and the end of smiling. For this false optimism that is cheating men in our day they should be given, not pessimism, but the true optimism, the joy that comes with the knowledge that God has been reconciled with men by His dear Son. This creates a good conscience — this alone, and nothing else; and a good conscience is a mighty driving power for every good work. D.

Bigots vs. Bigots.

"Bigotry in the South" is viewed with alarm by Charles P. Sweeney in the *Nation* (November 24). The immediate cause is the election as senator of Thomas E. Watson of Georgia, the best-known advocate of racial and religious intolerance in the United States, who, after the suppression of his newspaper, the *Jeffersonian,* now speaks through the *Columbia Sentinel.* "Watson's election, while due to a variety of circumstances and a combination of issues, is essentially the victory of a Fifth Estate, of the sinister forces of intolerance, superstition, prejudice, religious jingoism, and mobbism." Watson's "opposition to the League of Nations has been as violent as his antagonism to the war, but his attacks on the League and the Treaty were neither those of an intelligent seeker after peace nor of an ordinary political dissenter. Watson proclaimed, and induced thousands of his credulous followers to believe, that the League was an agency through

which the Vatican seeks to impress a Romanist and Jesuit super-government upon the world. President Wilson he painted as the tool of the Pope, whose political agent, according to Mr. Watson, is Mr. Joseph P. Tumulty, the President's secretary."

Describing the "anti-Catholic madness of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida," the writer says: "The city of Birmingham, Alabama, has but 10,000 Catholics out of 200,000 population. Nevertheless the good people of Birmingham have been led to believe that Catholics are plotting control of the city, State, and national government in the name of the Pope, that they seek the destruction of the public schools, and that they are a menace to the existence of the home as the basic unit of organized society. So firmly do the great majority of inhabitants believe these things that they go to the polls and elect men to public office on the single issue of protecting the Government and the community from Popery. Thus, the present Governor of Alabama, Thomas E. Kilby, was elected because he induced the voters to believe him a stauncher foe of Catholicism than his opponents. One of the rash pledges he made in his campaign, but has failed to redeem, was a promise to find legal means to compel priests to marry. One pledge that he has kept, was for the enactment of a "Convent Inspection Law." It is now in force. In its original form it directed sheriffs, upon written application of twenty-five citizens, at any time of day or night to proceed to the convent named in the application, thoroughly to inspect the place, and to inquire from every woman there if she was held against her will. There were objections to the form of the bill as presented originally, and a compromise was effected. The bill adopted and signed by the Governor establishes a State Commission to inspect the institutions at regular intervals. In Florida, when the grotesque Governor Sidney J. Catt sailed into office on a wave of anti-Catholic and anti-negro prejudice, a similar law has been adopted. The delusion inspiring this rare statute — that convents are polygamous institutions maintained for the Catholic clergy — is general wherever Watson and his associates have carried their campaigns.

The anti-Catholic prejudice is thoroughly organized. In Birmingham, for instance, if you don't belong to the "T. A.'s," you are suspect. "T. A.'s" means True Americans, a vast and rapidly growing secret organization having the extermination of Catholicism as its sole object. "No Catholics in public office" is its watchword. The present county administration of Jefferson County, which embraces Birmingham, was elected on an issue confined to the dismissal of a Catholic young woman stenographer in the county treasurer's office. The "T. A.'s" had ordered the former treasurer to dismiss her. He refused. The issue was joined. The treasurer and those who stood with him were defeated, and the young woman was promptly dismissed. The present city administration of Birmingham was elected because the "T. A.'s" supported it. When it took office, all Catholics, save two policemen, were dismissed.

The writer concludes his review by describing the methods employed by the anti-Catholic propaganda: terrorism and intimidation that does not shrink from incendiarism, circulating such papers as

Watson's publication and the *Menace,* framing anti-Catholic platforms on which candidates for political office are made to stand, and fraternalism. "Fraternalism is the machinery employed for organizing the anti-Catholic prejudice. The Masonic lodges, American Mechanics, Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen of the World, Odd-Fellows, Junior Order American Mechanics, are everywhere in evidence, and besides the 'T. A.'s' there have grown up a number of other societies devoted exclusively and actively to anti-Catholicism, among them the Guardians of Liberty, the Sons and Daughters of Washington, and the Ku-Klux Klan. 'These cities and towns are cursed with fraternalism,' said a newspaper man in Charlotte. 'If you don't belong to one of those orders, you might as well be on your way. I joined the Elks, but refused to join any other club or society. The boss thinks I'm a friend of the Catholics, whereas I merely refused to take part in organized hatred of Catholics or anybody else. The result is, I'm in wrong.' "

Whoever exposes bigotry, especially the blind and cruel workings of religious fanaticism, renders mankind, and religion in particular, a distinct service. Such papers as the *Menace* constitute a dangerous element in our public life. Not a little of the Watson spirit of religious intolerance dressed in a political garb cropped out lately in the antiparochial school campaign in Michigan. But the *Nation* must not forget to state that there is not only method in this madness, but also a reason for it, and that a compelling one. The most bigoted religious organization in the world is the Roman Catholic Church. Its policies have been unalterably fixed, and summarily reiterated not so long ago in the Syllabus of Pius IX. Even such an "enlightened and liberal" Pope as Leo XIII has deemed it necessary to declare that his Church must be given preferential rights in the United States. The Catholic Missionary Congress at Chicago in 1910 reverberated with the fervid oratory of those who want to "make America Catholic." Is the *Nation* not aware of *this* propaganda? What has it to say on *this* side of the issue? As to the inspection of convents, if no more is intended than to put them on a level with any other public institution, to which our sanitary and police officers must at all times have access, we see no ground for criticism. Nor do we hold that wrong is done by making it possible for inmates of such institutions to quit them if they are held in them against their will. The Catholics themselves ought to be the foremost champions of this inspection.

D.

Pilgrims' Theology.

The theology on which the faith of the Pilgrim Fathers had been fed, chiefly by their pastor John Robinson, is briefly sketched by Dr. H. H. Scullard in the *Hibbert Journal* (October). He doubts "whether the God of the Pilgrims is our God. John Robinson's idea of God was that of the great Egoist of the Universe. . . . 'God loveth Himself first and most, as the chiefest Good.' . . . Unlike Luther and some other of the sixteenth-century reformers, Robinson was a lover of philosophy. To him the universe was a rational order, and 'nothing true in right reason, and sound philosophy is, or can be, false in divinity.' . . . Every doctrine must justify itself in the court of

Reason, or at least be accepted on rationally approved authority. . . . The glory of God is infinitely more than the good of men. It is the cause and ground and substance of all good. How, then, can a rational God love men more than He loves Himself? The love of God for men is the love of His own work in them. God loves all good things, 'as He communicates with them, less or more, the effects of His own goodness.' . . . Unlimited self-realization is the prerogative of Deity, a prerogative not laid aside at the Incarnation, but finding its supreme vindication in the Cross.

"But is not the essence of the divine character self-sacrifice? I do not think Robinson would have said so. He would have scrutinized the word much more closely than we are in the habit of doing before applying it to a holy and omnipotent God. Sacrifice is a dangerous word to use of Deity without qualification or comment. There are meanings of the word which we have no right to accept in thinking about God. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.' But love is more than sacrifice, and giving cannot impoverish God. The 'sacrifice' of God might have meant not simply the condemnation of the world, which according to Christian theology it did, but the ruin of the world, which it was meant to avert. God loved Himself before He loved the world. Creation and redemption are alike the consequence of the divine self-love. So the same Evangelist who speaks of the love of God for the world records the prayer of Jesus, which looks beyond all sacrifice and all redemption to a far-off divine event, which is neither primarily the salvation of the world nor the perfection of the Church, but the revelation of the glory of God — 'That they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.' The glory of God and not the salvation of the race was the prime object of the Incarnation and the Cross.

"So at least it seemed to Robinson. This was the determinative thought in all that he wrote — a God glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing whatsoever He pleased in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. There were no limits to His power. The wills of men He turned whithersoever He would, but always, whether in renewing or in hardening, without doing violence to human freedom. Even sin was no obstacle, but only an occasion for the manifestation of the divine glory. With relentless logic, shattering the distinction between 'permitting' and 'ordering' — for how can God permit what He is powerless to prevent? — he boldly asserts that 'God orders both the sin and the sinner to His own supernatural ends.' Limitations of knowledge or of power, whether proceeding from the divine nature or from the divine will, were derogatory to the glory of God. The Moral Governor of the Universe never for one moment, through lack of power or lack of knowledge, lost control of the vast system of discordant and conflicting wills of men. It was His all-serving eye and all-embracing purpose which directed the whole course of human history. Nothing was done without Him. Even a limited atonement appeared to the Pilgrims more tolerable than the conception of a God powerless to achieve His ends."

The Pilgrims' God, then, was that well-known product of the

one-sided dialectics of Calvinism, developed with inexorable consistency from certain revealed facts in the Scriptures, to the exclusion of other revealed facts. As the "logic" which constructed this God proceeded upon the eclectic method in the choice of its Bible materials, it had to produce a one-sided God — very strong, indeed, but absolutely partial. One-sided "logic" was satisfied with this God, because in this logical God there are no longer any mysteries. And the sovereignty, majesty, and glory which Calvinistic theology celebrates in this God as the most admirable perfection are distinctions for which this God must forever be beholden to Calvinistic logicians, who first made this God "logically," and then crowned Him "logically." Is there cause for wonder why Unitarianism and Universalism afterwards arose in the Pilgrim settlements?

The Pilgrims' Bible "was a convenient summary, but not a complete transcript, of all the oracles of God. Many of the words of men inspired by the Spirit of God had not been committed to writing. What the Canonical Scriptures contained was all that was necessary for 'salvation' and 'obedience.' And these oracles are living oracles, and so, though none may add to them, they have the power of revealing more of the will of God, as men may be prepared to receive it. There is no more frequently quoted sentence in Robinson's works than the words of his parting address to the Pilgrims on leaving Holland, 'The Lord has more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy Word.' The Lutherans and the Calvinists had alike forgotten this, and so come to 'a period' in religion. Everything was being stereotyped. In England the laxer church party was turning the Gospel into 'an easier law,' and the Puritan party into a harder law, both forgetting that the Gospel is not a law of commandments contained in ordinances, but a law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Against this perversion of the truth Robinson protested. There were no final and infallible interpreters of the Word of God. Let every man remember that 'the Word of God neither came from him nor to him alone.' Least of all were his own interpretations a law to the Church he served. He urged the Pilgrims 'to follow him no further than he followed Christ, and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of His to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry.' "

It is not easy to sharply delineate Robinson's attitude towards the normative authority of Scripture. His reviewer says: "He had discovered in it the true note of inspiration, which is certitude — 'The truth of God goes not by peradventures, neither needs it any such paper-shot as likelihoods are to assault the adversary withal.' Probability was not for him the very guide of life. The will of God could be known, 'To the Law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.' " This sounds reassuring, but how a preacher holding such a view of the authority of the written Word can virtually discredit his own utterances in favor of some one who might receive a greater revelation later — this is perplexing.

Dr. Scullard considers what Robinson says about Scripture "the language of liberalism and of liberty." Of liberalism — yes; but of

liberty — hardly; for the question will not down: What liberty does he mean? Liberty from the Word, which "makes us free," or from a certain understanding of the Word? The latter appears to be the intended meaning; but, in that case, by what criterion is the reliability of a later understanding tested, and an earlier one rejected? Preaching upon Robinson's basis, a preacher would have to say to his audience at the same time: Believe me! and: Be ready to disbelieve me! This is psychologically impossible and theologically inadmissible; for "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," or — that is the implied corollary — hold his peace. There is in Robinson's position on the authority of Scripture an ingrain of *Schwaermerei.*

"The idea of the visible Church which the Pilgrims had may seem to some narrow, impractical, and insufficient for the needs of our time, but it meant much to them and may not be without instruction for us. 'Many men have written much about the notes and marks of the true Church, by which it is differenced and discerned from all other assemblies; and many others have sought for it, as Joseph and Mary did for Christ, with heavy hearts, Luke 2, 48, that they might rest there under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, enjoying the promises of His presence and power. . . . I had thought the Churches and people of God should have been known by His dwelling among them, and walking there, and by Christ's presence in the midst of them.' . . . The visible Church becomes recognized by all just in the same way as an individual Christian. Labels are no more necessary in the one case than in the other. The unity of the Church according to Robinson, perhaps with the high-priestly prayer of Christ in mind, was qualitative and not quantitative. The visible Church was 'one' because it was one in 'kind' and one in 'nature,' not because it had one visible head or one common external organization. 'All true Churches from the beginning to the end of the world are one in nature and essential constitution'; and that which constitutes a Church is the meeting of Christian men in the name of Christ, the actual fellowship of those who have made a public covenant with Christ to do all things to the glory of God." "Cast in the apostolic mold of the first Church of the New Testament, the Church was to Robinson 'a spiritual politic body,' and the 'spiritual' character of its members was the *nota ecclesiae.* Because he did not find this character in the Church of England, he said: 'I cannot but confess and profess, though with great grief, that it is to us a matter of scruple, which we cannot overcome, to give that honor unto it which is due from the servants of Christ to the Church of Christ, rightly collected and constituted.' The entire conduct by which the members were to display their 'spirituality' was regulated with extreme exactness thus: 'It is to me a matter of great scruple, and conscience to depart one hair's-breadth (extraordinary accidents ever excepted) from their (the Apostles') practise and institution, in anything truly ecclesiastical, though never so small in itself."

The Pilgrims' Church was a theocracy. That the adoption of its forms of "spirituality" could be an utterly carnal act seems not to have entered their minds. D.

BOOK REVIEW.

Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.: —

1. **John Wiclif.** *William Dallmann.* 79 pages. Illustrated. 50 cts.

What the world knows about "the Morning Star of the Reformation" is here submitted for the third time in a lively narrative, compacted out of thousands of facts gathered with great labor, and constructed into a harmonious whole with great skill and good judgment.

2. **Proceedings of the Thirty-First National Convention** of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. 93 pages. 75 cts.

This *résumé* of the acts of the Sixteenth Delegate Synod, assembled at Detroit in June, 1920, exhibits the features which made the late convention epochal.

3. **Lutheran Annual. 1921.** 106 pages. 15 cts.
4. **Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1921.** 106 pages. 15 cts.

Harmonious as regards contents and make-up, these twin publications offer themselves as congenial companions to Missouri Lutherans on their pilgrimage during 1921.

5. **Catalog. Concordia Publishing House. 1920–21.** 516 pages.

This is a fine evidence of genuine publicity work which the Missouri Synod is doing by means of its own printing presses, bindery, and bookshop; also of the variety of interests which it is endeavoring to serve; and last, but not least, of the abundant blessing which Heaven is continuing to pour out on this enterprise.

6. **The Concordia Sunday-school Pin.** Celluloid enrolment pin, 1½ cts.; gold-plated pin, 75 cts., plus war tax; service disk, 10 cts., plus war tax.

A simplified and economical system of rewards for Sunday-school pupils is here offered, which deserves to be adopted by all Sunday-school officers who wish to save time and money without sacrificing an essential feature of a sane system of rewards.

The following useful and timely tracts are announced: —

1. **Can the Secular State Teach Religion?** *W. H. T. Dau.* 16 pages. 6 cts. and 4 cts. (American Luther League, Fort Wayne, Ind.)
2. **The Glories of the Lutheran Church.** *Arthur Brunn.* 6 pages.
3. **This Do! How Often?** A Communion Tract. 6 pages.
4. **Am I Converted?** *Theo. Graebner.* 6 pages.
5. **What Is This Evolution?** 6 pages.
6. **Baptism.** *Theo. Kuehn.* 6 pages.

Most of these tracts are offered free of charge while the supply lasts; for those not free a nominal price is charged. (American Publicity Bureau, 22—26 E. 17th St., New York City.)

7. **Weihnachtsklaenge.** Ein Beitrag zur Weihnachtsfeier in Kirche, Schule und Haus. Von *J. M. Goesswein.* With a musical supplement. 23 pages. 10 cts. (Success Printing Co., St. Louis, Mo.)

8. **My Reasons for Opposing the Norwegian Lutheran Church.** *B. M. Holt.* 29 pages. 5 cts.; less in quantities.

9. **Is Dancing a Sin?** *B. M. Holt.* 8 pages. 3 cts.; less in quantities. (Order from author, 111 Eighth St., Fargo, N. Dak.)

Rev. A. M. W. Wahl, pastor of Epiphany Ev. Luth. Church of Eau Claire, Wis., has published a historical sketch of his congregation in commemoration of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Johannes Herrmann, Zwickau, Saxony, has published *Margareta Lenk's* **Des Pfarrers Kinder** in a fifth edition ($1.50), and four beautiful little stories in tract form for children (**Die kleinen Meistersaenger,** *Marg. Lenk;* **Man bittet, stark zu klingeln!** *Marg. Lenk;* **Dummerchen,** *Bertha Mercator;* **Das stille Kind,** *Bertha Mercator*). — The late Frau Lenk is destined to remain the favorite story-teller of the Lutheran Church for many years to come, and her companion, Bertha Mercator, will likewise command an increasing circle of readers. German children can hardly be given a more useful souvenir than these publications.

The Priesthood of Believers. *Rev. G. H. Gerberding, D. D.* 41 pages. (The Inner Mission Board of the United Lutheran Church in America.)

The anniversary of the publication of Luther's *Liberty of a Christian Man* has called forth this appeal to the laymen in particular to show at their homes, in their congregations, in the world at large, that they recognize their spiritual dignity as believers in the priestly reconciling work of the Redeemer, and points out to them ways of making themselves useful to the Church. But all this usefulness is independent of the L. B. A. (Lutheran Brotherhood of America); it existed before the Brotherhood, is now in evidence without affiliation with it, and will outlast it. There is an equivocation in chap. 6 of this brochure between "brotherhood" written with a small b (= the local congregation) and "Brotherhood" written with a capital B (= the national organization).

Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.: —

1. **Faith and Certainty.** *C. Skovgaard-Petersen.* Translated from the Danish by *A. W. Kjellstrand.* 61 pages.

Starting with a spirited attack upon the doubting skeptic, who regards assurance of faith as an impossibility, and upon the listless, sleeping Christian, who does not feel the necessity of assurance, the author meets the charge that Scripture itself denies believers assurance by its description of the surprise of those at the Lord's right hand in the day of judgment. So far his argument is in the main pertinent. But, next, he takes up the subject of certainty itself, and insists that it can be properly discussed only when three main stages or degrees in Christian certainty are admitted: —

"Certainty based on the 'Word' alone;
"Certainty based on the Word and partially confirmed by experience;
"Certainty based on the Word and actualized by complete fulfilment."
(p. 13.)

Although the author repeatedly deprecates basing certainty on one's feelings, he nevertheless asserts that the certainty based on the Word must in the actual life of a believer, especially in afflictions, be reinforced by "the compulsion of conscience in relation to the Word." (p. 48.) "Consequently, under normal conditions, the certainty of faith has a twofold foundation and source. It is upborne both by the Word and by experience; but not always to the same degree by both. . . . But in either case the certainty of faith rests upon the same firm foundation; for in both cases the certainty is upborne by the same divine power of truth. The Word is this power in the bud; *it* operates on the conscience. Experience is this power in bloom and fruition; *it* embraces the entire personality." (p. 51.) This is an artificial view of Christian assurance that is foreign to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, which know of only one basis for the assurance of faith, the Word of grace in Christ Jesus.

2. **The Faith of a Child,** and other stories for children. *Runa.* 144 pages. 30 cts.

3. **The Lord Is My Light.** Stories and Poems for Children. *J. M. Anderson.* 64 pages. 30 cts.

Both these juveniles are illustrated; their contents are pure; however, in the publication named first the "Knights of the White Christ," and still more so "On the Sea," are hardly for children.

4. **The Prince of Peace.** Christmas Program for Sunday-schools. 28 pages. 10 cts.

5. **Fridsfursten.** Julprogram för Söndagsskolan. Both publications edited by *Rev. S. M. Hill.* 16 pages. 10 cts.

Contain catechetical matter, songs with music, and recitations.

Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O.: —

1. **A Guide in Church Finance.** *Samuel A. Stein, D. D.,* Lutheran pastor. 36 pages. 50 cts. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

It will do any pastor, theological student, synodical or congregational officer, in fact, every member of a congregation and Synod, good to read this brochure, which advocates as requisites for the financial reliability and stability of a church the dissemination of general and particular knowledge regarding the current and extraordinary needs of the church, suggests as an efficient means for meeting these needs the introduction of the duplex envelope system for collections, and shows the way how to introduce the system, and how to answer those who oppose it.

2. **Sweet Fields of Bethlehem.** A Christmas Service for Sunday-schools. 27 pages. 6 cts.

Froehliche Weihnacht! Weihnachtsliturgie fuer christliche Gemeinde- und Sonntagsschulen. 29 pages. 6 cts.

Both publications contain a complete order of service for children to be used at the Christmas celebration: liturgy, hymns and songs with music, and catechetical material.

George H. Doran Co., New York: —

1. **A Guide to the Study of Church History.** (Third edition.) *W. J. McGloshlin, Ph. D., D. D.* 359 pages.

The distinguishing feature of this students' manual is the sane method pursued by the author in arranging the vast and varied materials with which the church historian has to deal. The text consists of grammatically unconnected jottings, such as a student would hurriedly write down while listening to a lecture, — only the average student would frequently miss the thought-connection and -progression which make each paragraph in this book a store-house of information and an incentive to detailed study, and each chapter a clear and distinct sketch of an era in history. For compactness, correct division, and lucid arrangement of subjects the book is a marvel. Most of his judgments, too, are sound. It is the best aid to a rapid, comprehensive, and withal adequate study of church history that has appeared lately.

2. **The Argonauts of Faith.** The Adventures of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims. *Basil Matthews.* (Foreword by *Viscount Bryce* and illustrations by *Ernest Prater.*) 185 pages.

In nine chapters, which are literary gems and are skilfully subdivided to set off the progress of the dramatic action in each, the story of the Pilgrims is here told with much ideal coloring and dialog, yet along essentially historical lines. Of the many books that have commemorated the landing of the Pilgrims, Matthew's is undoubtedly the one most fascinating. The Prolog connects that event poetically with Greek mythology (the legend of the Golden Fleece) and the Epilog is a patriotic reverie on the Golden Fleece of American freedom. These two flights are beyond the reach of the historical *nexus causalis.* D.

3. **Training the Devotional Life.** By *Luther Allen Weigle* and *Henry H. Tweedy.* 96 pp., 5×7½. Price, 75 cts.

The very fact that a book on training the child "in the art of devotion" is regarded as necessary is a reproach to the Christianity of our day. Why should one write a book on "Teaching Children to Pray in the Home," "Teaching Children to Pray in the [Sunday] School," and "Memorization of Worship Materials"? And will those who neglect so elementary a duty be sufficiently interested in the subject to hear what two Yale professors have to say about it? And will those who read and digest this particular book be brought close to the heart of the problem? Throughout the slight volume we find occasion for queries in the margin. What of references, for collateral reading, to such liberals as Fosdick, Athearn, and Cope? What of the author's objections to "the dogmatic imprisonment of the child's mind" implied by memorizing the Creed? And do we not know what is meant when the caution is uttered, not to permit "dogmatic presuppositions" in the child when it approaches the Bible, and that the child must be prepared "to study the record in the light *of all truth*"; that, to speak plainly, our children must be "trained in the light of the results of our ripest and most reverent Christian scholarship"? Those acquainted with New Theology

English know what this means. On presuppositions such as these, why train a child to pray at all? There is less harm done by a Free-thought tract than by such encouragements to devotion as this new Doran book. G.

The Macmillan Company, New York: —

An Introduction to the Old Testament, Chronologically Arranged. *Harlan Creelman, Ph. D., D. D.* (Foreword by *Frank Knight Sanders, Ph. D., D. D.*) 383 pages.

Among the isagogical compends for the study of the Old Testament this book must be classified with those belonging to the school of historical criticism, which arrives at its interpretation of the Hebrew Bible and at its value-judgments of its varied contents by way of the historical conditions under which the writings of the Old Testament were produced, collected, and "edited." The divine origin of the Scriptures is not an *a priori* fact with the representatives of this school, nor does it frequently come out as an *a posteriori* fact from their scientific labors, no matter how much of the spirit of religion, reverence, and devotion these scholars endeavor to inject into their learned research work. Dr. Creelman's work differs from that of his predecessors in two respects: 1. as regards method. "The customary method followed in 'Introductions of the Old Testament' has been to deal with the different books, following either the order in which they occur in our English versions (*e. g.*, Bennett), or according to their arrangement in the Hebrew Canon (*e. g.*, Driver), or grouping them together in such convenient literary divisions as history, prophecy, and poetry, etc. (*e. g.*, Cornill). In distinction from such plans and methods this *Introduction* discusses and classifies the Old Testament literature from the standpoint of history and chronology, *i. e.*, the different books, or sections, or chapters, or verses [!], as the case may be, are taken up in chronological sequence as they relate to definite periods of Hebrew history, either as the Old Testament furnishes the history of those periods, or as its literature had its origin in them." In a chronological index (pp. 353—358) the manner in which this plan works out in detail is exhibited with regard to every chapter and verse of the Old Testament. The author's effort represents the last analysis of "historical criticism" as applied to the Old Testament. — 2. A distinct aim of the author is to codify the findings of scholars who have worked in this field before him. His list of reference literature embraces more than 300 titles, and among the names of authors it will not be easy to find a scholar of note that has been omitted; if any have been, they are Germans. He has embodied in his text 180 quotations of primary importance from 60 authors, not including "references either to passages where the substance of a writer's opinion is given or to different scholars' positions on critical questions," which are frequently referred to throughout the book. Thus this book becomes, at the same time, an introduction to the literature of historical criticism of the Old Testament, and any one looking for information on this subject will hardly find a compend that furnishes that information more readily and comprehensively.

Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York: —

A History of France. *Victor Duruy.* Translated by *M. Cary.* With an Introduction and Continuation by *J. Franklin Jameson, Ph. D.* New edition, revised and continued to 1919 by *Mabell S. C. Smith, A. B., A. M.* 791 pages.

Few that have had occasion to make a study of the history of France will disagree from the opinion of the late Andrew D. White that "of all the short summaries of French History this is the best." Frenchmen are good narrators, and Duruy's style and skill in exhibiting the *nexus* in historical events are thoroughly French. If there is any bias in his presentation of the rich and stirring scenes with which French history is replete, it is that of the patriot. Duruy loves France, and he writes the story of *his* country, but he is faithful to the facts of history, and has a marvelous grasp of them. The Reformation is almost a negligible quantity in French history, except in one brief period, and the treatment of it in this compend is therefore limited to a small space. The appendix, which brings the story down to the late World War till the armistice, is likely to prove premature. Excellent maps (13) are inserted in the book. Paper, printing, and binding are very good.

The American Bible Society, in commemoration of the Pilgrims' Landing at Plymouth, has issued a beautiful souvenir folder, **In the Name of God, Amen!** for *Mayflower* Universal Bible Sunday, November 28, 1920, a little tract, **A Little Journey to Plymouth When the "Mayflower" Landed,** and a libretto for "a dramatic service of the Bible designed to be used in the churches," entitled, **The Pilgrim and the Book,** by *Percy Mackaye.*

Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, Goettingen, Germany: —

1. **Meister Eckhart.** Von *Walter Lehmann, Pfarrer.* 312 pages. M. 10.50, plus.
2. **Desiderius Erasmus.** Ein Lebensbild in Auszuegen aus seinen Werken. Von *Prof. D. Dr. Walther Koehler.* 239 pages. M. 7, plus.

These two publications, which, wonderful to relate, appeared amidst the nerve-racking experiences of the late World War, constitute, respectively, Nos. 14. 15 and 12. 13 of Gustav Pfannmueller's *Die Klassiker der Religion,* a serial publication, which so far embraces the following treatises: 1. *Jesus,* by Dr. Heinrich Weinel; 2. *Johann Arndt,* by Lic. Wilhelm Koepp; 3. *Der katholische Modernismus,* by Dr. Jos. Schnitzer; 4. 5. *Die Propheten,* by Lic. Gustav Pfannmueller; 6. *Ignatius von Loyola,* by Dr. Philipp Funk; 7. *Paul de Lagarde,* by Prof. Herm. Mulert; 8. 9. *Kierkegaard,* by Dr. Edvard Lehmann; 10. 11. *Luther,* by Dr. W. Koehler, and the two publications noted above. The aim of the editor is to acquaint the modern reader with prominent persons in the domain of religion directly by exhibiting them through their writings. Judging from the two titles submitted, the spirit of modernism in religion dominates the series, and becomes evident in editorial footnotes and judicial remarks, with which the volumes are interspersed. German thoroughness and exactness are in evidence everywhere in these portraitures of classic personages in religion by means of their own literary products.

Alfred Toepelmann, Giessen, Germany: —

Einfuehrung in das Alte Testament. Geschichte, Literatur und Religion Israels. Von *Dr. Johannes Meinhold.* 316 pages; paper cover. M. 10.

This book was written to serve in a theological course at German universities, and for private study of such as wish to be abreast of the times as regards Bible-study by the school of historical criticism. In particular, the author wishes to help university students who went to war to regain the time lost through military service. There is, accordingly, an endeavor made in this treatise to reduce the vast material of the historico-critical school to the narrowest confines, and the author is a master in the art of literary self-restraint, of perspicuous and judicial arrangement of his topics, and a splendid and fascinating talker. Isagogical treatises often prove dry reading; not so this book; there is not a dull line in it. But, we regret, this is all that can be said in its praise, and even this praise constitutes an element of danger. For what does the author purpose to teach applicants for the ministry regarding the Bible of the Old Covenant? "Holy Writ," "oracles of God," in the sense of a divine revelation by inspired writers, — this is something which the original Hebrews did not know and did not care to have. "Holy Scripture" was produced by designing church politicians: the Decalog is a late invention, the deuteronomical law found in the days of Josiah a fraud, the entire Old Testament a congeries of documents, mutilated, reconstructed, edited and reedited a number of times to suit the purposes of a religious faction or school. How students who have been trained to believe all this can preach the Old Testament as the Word of God, passes comprehension. The Lord have mercy on the people on whom these ministers are let loose!

C. Ludwig Ungelenk, Dresden/Leipzig: —

Pastoralblaetter fuer Predigt, Seelsorge und kirchliche Unterweisung. Herausgegeben von *Pastor Lic. Erich Stange* u. a. 62. Jahrg., 12. Heft. September, 1920.

This number closes Vol. 62 of a monthly for homiletics and pastoral theology that has served the better elements in the German evangelical church during two generations. Neither as regards contents or form does it meet the wants of an American Lutheran pastor, but it contains much that is suggestive and thus may prove helpful, even *per contra,* and its discussions of live issues that confront the pastor in his work afford an insight into the sorry conditions with which evangelical Germany is struggling.

In a pretty memorial *Das Rauhe Haus* of Hamburg ("the fountain room of Inner Mission") announces the death of its Director, *Dr. M. Hennig,* and pictures its almost hopeless future in impoverished Germany. (*"Deutschland ist ein armes, zertretenes Land."*) D.